

### **A different kind of maintenance**

- If you have “Lost Your Lawn”, you will no longer need weekly maintenance
- Periodic additions of mulch when needed
- It is best to keep blowers to a minimum (rake the autumn leaves, or leave them as mulch)
- No pesticides (kills the good bugs and the soil biology)
- Selective shaping; no pruning with a electric hedge shears
- Find a Green Gardener: <http://www.mywatershedwatch.org/findgardener.html>

### **Quarterly Maintenance**

#### Spring

- Turn on irrigation system
- Check irrigation system for leaks, broken lines
- Apply compost tea

#### Summer

- Keep an eye on irrigation
- Watch for pests (IPM)
- Replenish mulch if needed
- Some deadheading (remove dead flowers to encourage bloom)

#### Fall

- Turn down irrigation timer
- Rake leaves (put in compost pile)
- Cut back perennials after bloom, groom grasses
- Hand weeding
- Apply compost tea

#### Winter

- Turn off irrigation system
- Continue hand weeding where needed
- Pruning of woody trees and shrubs

### **Healthy Soil**

- Organic fertilizers
- Mycorrhizae
- Compost
- AACT (Aerobically activated compost tea)
- Sheet Mulch
- Electric blower, just for paths

### **A biologically alive soil holds water well and drains well**

- Add organic matter (compost)
- AACT (Actively Aerated Compost Tea) available at Lyngso Garden Materials, etc.
- Don't compact (no digging when soggy)
- Don't poison the Soil Foodweb with pesticides, herbicides, or chemical fertilizers
- Protect the soil with organic mulch

**Fertilizing**

- Native plants - no fertilizer
- Exotic non-native ornamentals and fruit trees
- Specialized organic fertilizers for Roses, Citrus, Azalea/Rhody/Camellia
- EB Stone, Dr. Earth, fish emulsion
- If you need to (sandy soils?), use a low first number (Nitrogen)
- Apply at ½ - 1/3 recommended dose
- Perennials/evergreens: apply March-April with the new growth
- Deciduous plants: apply when they leaf out in Spring

**Weed Management**

- Mostly pulling, hoeing, etc.
- Get rid of invasives, Privets, Feather Grass
- Mulch & sheet mulch
- Paper under mulch (organic weed block)- mainly used at installation time
- Corn gluten
- Organic sprays, flaming, steam, etc.      often not worth the cost or effort

**Pest Management**

- Learn IPM
- Beneficials like Delphastus beetles for white fly
- Horticultural or Neem oil
- Foliar sea kelp for bacterial molds
- Dormant spray
- Insecticidal soap
- Compost tea as a preventative for Peach Leaf Curl

**General Chores**

- Remove dead, dying, diseased plants
- Top off mulch
- Clean up piles of leaves and branches
- Remove dead wood, etc.

**When to Plant?**

- Fall is best, Spring next best, then Winter. Summer is most stressful.
- Annuals: Oct – November
- Shrubs: Oct – February
- Riparian plants, any time of year (must be irrigated anyway)

**Planting Tips**

- Be aware of the mature size, and site requirements of each plant
- Choose “garden adaptable” plants
- Skip the fertilizer
- Plant in native soil
- Apply beneficial mycorrhizae at time of planting
- Improve the soil - mulch and compost tea
- Plant high or on a mound

**Meadows and other special situations**

- Pre and post weeding!
- Annual clean up/mowing
- Ecological succession

**Pruning Tips**

- Remove all dead, dying & diseased
- Plant separation (avoid overplanting)
- Crown reduction, selective natural look
- Make proper cuts, 1/8 inch above collar
- Learn the plants! If in doubt, only remove 1/3 of plant
- Prune broad-leaved evergreens and shrubs in early summer
- Want a fuller, denser plant? Tip prune often. Pretend you're a deer

**Minimal Pruning only**

- Ceanothus
- Manzanita
- Coffeeberry (if planted in correct location)
- Indian Hawthorn

**Wait until frost is over**

- Mexican Sage
- Geranium (Pelargonium)
- Citrus
- Avocado
- Bougainvillea
- Fuchsia

**Heavy Pruning okay**

- Baccharis (Coyote Bush)
- California Fuchsia
- Matilija Poppy

**Deadheading and cutting back perennials**

- Deadhead during bloom season to remove faded flowers & encourage reblooming
- Cut back in Fall/Winter to refresh and make more compact (remove brown foliage and any legginess)

**Grasses**

- Cut back in Winter, if at all
- Better to "groom" with hands or a steel rake for a more natural look
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**Mulching Tips**

- Mulch controls weeds, moderates soil temperature, improves soil, prevents soil compaction and erosion (yeah, mulch!)
- Mulch provides Nitrogen, which can be good or bad. . .
- Apply rock or organic mulches 3-4" deep
- Keep mulch 6" away from crowns of woody shrubs and trees.
- Desert and chaparral plants thrive in non-organic mulches like stone, gravel and decomposed granite

### Watering Tips

- Test your soil for drainage speed
- For better drainage, plant on a mound
- Even drought tolerant plants, if nursery grown, will need irrigation for at least 2-3 summers.
- In general, water infrequently, but deeply
- But really, check the soil with your hand and/or moisture meter!
- Overhead watering not recommended due to fungal pathogens caused by moist warm conditions.

### How often to water? “. . .It depends. . . “

- Water the pot before planting
- Water the plant right after planting (soak the root ball and surrounding area)
- Even drought tolerant plants need extra watering while establishing
- Rough sample guidelines will vary with soil type, time of year, irrigation system, sun/shade, wind, etc.
- CHECK if top two inches dry out between watering (good)
- NEW for one month –to get roots into soil: 30 min every 3 days
- FIRST Summer – 1hour/every 5 days (point source), 2 hours for inline
- SECOND Summer – 1 hour/every 10 days (point source), 2 hours for inline
- THIRD Summer – 1.5 hours/every 15 days (point source), 2-3 hours inline
- Increase intervals between watering, not reduce amount of water!

### No Summer water when established

- Coffeeberry
- Some Ceanothus
- Toyon
- Flannelbush
- Western Redbud
- Woolly Blue Curls
- Douglas Iris
- Many Buckwheats
- White Sage
- Dara’s Choice Sage
- Cleveland Sage

### Resources

[www.goingnativegardentour.org](http://www.goingnativegardentour.org)

Going Native Garden Tour – April each year

<https://groups.yahoo.com/group/GardeningWithNatives>

Yahoo Group – very helpful!

[www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org)

California Native Plant Society

[www.cngf.org](http://www.cngf.org)

California Native Garden Foundation

Excellent Book:

*Care & Maintenance of Southern California Native Plant Gardens*

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden